

Holiday Decoration Guidelines and Use of Alcohol on Federal Property

(NOTE TO SUPERVISORS: Please ensure that all employees without access to e-mail receive a paper copy of this message.)

Memorandum

To: All Occupants of the Main and South Interior Buildings
Distribution to all DOI employees Nation-wide

From: Douglas J. Bourgeois, Director
National Business Center

Subject: Holiday Decoration Guidelines and Use of Alcohol on Federal Property

Many employees and Departmental organizations choose to celebrate the spirit of the holiday season by decorating their work space. However, we want to make sure that, in so doing, a safe and healthy work environment is maintained. Please take a moment to read the following guidelines for the arrangements of displays and decorations in federally-occupied buildings that have been established by the General Services Administration (GSA) and the NBC Division of Facilities Management Services (DFMS).

Guidelines:

- Decorations and displays must not use lighted candles, open flames, or high heat-generating devices.
- Except as noted below, all decorations and displays in offices and all public spaces such as corridors, lobbies, cafeterias, auditoriums, or other places of assembly shall be constructed of non-combustible or flame-retardant materials. Additionally, decorations and displays must be kept clear of any fire-alarm devices (e.g., pull stations, annunciators, strobe lights, public-address speakers, etc.) corridor lighting, exit signs, and egress routes including access to exit doors.
- Holiday lights and extension cords must bear the approval mark of an independent testing laboratory (e.g., UL, FM, CSA). Lights should be checked for broken or loose sockets, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections. If damaged in any way, they must not be used. Extension cords must be of the proper size, must not be run through doorways or transoms, must not be plugged into another extension cord, and must not pose a tripping hazard.
- The installation or attachment of decorations and holiday lights to ceilings in corridors or offices in the Main Interior Building (MIB) is prohibited. Attaching or affixing materials to the ceiling—even with the use of tape—may disturb asbestos-containing materials in the ceiling.

- The attachment of electric lights or devices to a light fixture, public-address, or a sprinkler system is a violation of the National Electrical Code and is prohibited.
- Holiday lights must be turned off at the close of business each day.
- Subject to the conditions above, artificial trees are permitted. Artificial trees must be labeled as flame-retardant.
- Electric lights are prohibited on artificial trees that are of metal construction.
- Live trees that are delivered to the MIB should be delivered to the building via the D Ramp receiving/loading dock and must be taken to upper floors via the freight elevator. Please do not use the passenger elevators or lobby entrances to transport live trees to your work area.
- The DFMS may permit the use of a live tree provided the following conditions are met:
 1. The tree stands in water and in a secure stand.
 2. The tree is clear of exit routes.
 3. There are no other combustibles in the area likely to be ignited by fire in the tree.
 4. The maximum height of the tree does not exceed two-thirds of the ceiling height.
 5. The tree is checked daily to ensure it has sufficient water.

Exceptions to the above must be submitted in writing and approved in advance. Submissions should be addressed to Gary Peacock, Building Manager, DFMS, at mail stop 1210-MIB. Pertinent questions may be directed to the Building Manager's Office on (202) 208-7560.

You may contact the Building Manager's Office between 8:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. during the week of January 3, 2005, to have live trees picked up by our custodial contractor. The DFMS will make arrangements with its trash-hauling contractor to have the trees processed for compost.

Guidance for the purchase of holiday decorations and cards, acceptance of gifts, soliciting contributions, and business-related parties and events can be obtained from your servicing ethics counselor or by contacting the Department's Ethics Office on (202) 208-7960. A copy of the Departmental guidance can be viewed and printed from the following URL:
<http://www.doi.gov/ethics/docs/holiday01.pdf>.

Use of Alcohol on Federal Property: As provided by the Office of the Solicitor memorandum dated November 30, 1998, there is a general prohibition against use alcoholic beverages in U.S. Government buildings; however, the GSA delegated to the head of the agency (the Secretary) the authority to waive the prohibition. This authority for the Main and South Interior Buildings is exercised by the National Business Center, DFMS. Before serving alcoholic beverages into the Main or South Interior Buildings, you must obtain written approval in advance from the Chief, DFMS. The Request for Authorization to Serve Alcoholic Beverages form is available online and can be obtained at the following URL: http://www.nbc.gov/Alcohol_Wavier.pdf. The form also is available from the Special Events Office, room 1343, or DFMS, room 1210,

MIB. The form asks for information to demonstrate that proper consideration, safety precautions, and controls will be exercised. Completed forms should be forwarded to the Chief, DFMS, mail stop 1210-MIB. Pertinent questions or requests for additional information should be directed to the Special Events Office on (202) 208-4412, or DFMS on (202) 208-7182.

We ask for your cooperation with the above and hope this is a safe and happy holiday season for everyone.